

EMERGING CHRISTIANITY AND SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM: A «QUMRANIC» PERSPECTIVE

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In our conversation over «Christianity: a Religion Between Two Cultures» the task entrusted to me was to chart the context of one of the two components that formed the cradle of emerging Christianity in the first century CE: the Judaism of the Roman Period.¹ This seems to me to be an over ambitious goal, impossible to deal with in the short time allotted. The Judaism of Palestine, of Alexandria, of Rome, of Antioch or of Corinth, while having more than enough elements in common to allow each community to identify itself as a Jewish community and to allow any stranger to recognise its members as Jews, were, as far as we know, different enough as to render any generalisation futile.² It would be better, therefore, for me to leave the Judaism of the Diaspora out of my considerations at this juncture,³ and to limit my reflections to Palestinian Judaism, also duly influenced by Hellenism long before Palestine

1. This is an annotated version of my contribution to the Round Table discussion held during the meeting of the SNTS in Barcelona. I thank very warmly the SNTS for the invitation to participate in the meeting, and the local organisers, particularly Prof. Armand Puig, for all the efforts made to make the meeting a most successful and memorable event.

2. See, for example, the articles collected in the three volumes on *Judaism in Late Antiquity*, edited by J. NEUSNER, A. J. AVERY-PECK and B. CHILTON, Leiden: Brill 2001. Some authors, such as G. BOCCACCINI, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought, 300 BCE-200 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress 1991), go so far as to speak of «Judaisms» in order to underline the differences among the different varieties of Jewish thought systems.

3. Where the influence of Hellenism would have been more pronounced. See, for example, the classic study of W.C. VAN UNNIK, *Das Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora in der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit* (AGAJC 17; Leiden: Brill 1993), or the more recent one by J.J. COLLINS, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (New York: Crossroad 1983).

became a Roman province.⁴ Within Palestinian Judaism, we will look at the emerging Christianity exclusively through the perspective provided by some of the manuscripts from Qumran, because they provide us with the best, documented case to study the emergence of a Jewish group at roughly the same time Christianity was emerging.⁵

I have decided to present a single aspect, which may illuminate the context of the new Jewish sect that was emerging (Christianity),⁶ namely the community self-understanding that characterises some of the texts of Qumran. I hope that reflecting upon this self-understanding will show that emerging Christianity was developing the same strategies used by other Jewish Palestinian groups of the time to determine and strengthen its own self-understanding and self-identification.

Before I start presenting the evidence, however, a few words are needed about how we understand today the collection of texts we call «Dead Sea Scrolls».⁷ The availability of the scrolls of the whole collection has given rise to a set of questions quite different from those that dominated research until the nineties. In the fifties and sixties, scholars, impressed by the contents of cave 1, assumed without reflection that the texts found in the caves were all sectarian, and that all the texts were the product of the people who lived at

4. See the classic studies of V. TCHERIKOVER, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 1961), S. LIEBERMAN, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America New York 1962), and M. HENGEL, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestina During the Early Hellenistic Period* (London: SCM 1974), as well as the more recent collections of studies on the topic: P.W. VAN DER HORST, *Hellenism – Judaism – Christianity. Essays on Their Interaction* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 8; Kampen: Kok 1994); ID., *Japhet in the Tents of Shem. Studies on Jewish Hellenism in Antiquity* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 32; Leuven: Peeters 2002), and J.L. KUGEL (ed.), *Shem in the Tents of Japhet. Essays on the Encounter of Judaism and Hellenism* (Supplement to the JSJ 74; Leiden: Brill 2002). Needless to say, my understanding of Hellenism and Judaism goes beyond the usual dichotomy, much in line with the considerations of P.S. ALEXANDER, «Hellenism and Hellenization as Problematic Historical Categories», in T. ENGERBERG-PEDERSEN (ed.), *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox 2001), pp. 63-80, and the contribution of W.A. MEEKS, «Judaism, Hellenism, and the Birth of Christianity», in the same volume, pp. 17-27.

5. Although the beginning of the settlement at Qumran is one of the most disputed topics in the field, both by archaeologist and by historians, there is total agreement on the date of the destruction and the deposit of the scrolls in the caves: 68 CE.

6. Perhaps it would have been more precise to say: the different Jewish groups which formed emerging Christianity, since, as a matter of fact, I do think that emerging Christianity was as variegated and diversified as Palestinian Judaism was. But since I also think that the different Christian groups have more than enough elements in common to allow each community to identify itself as Christian, I will keep using the shorthand term «Christianity».

7. The following observations are a summary of the reflections put forth at a Congress organized by the Italian «Associazione laica di cultura biblica: Biblia» in Venice 2003, F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, «Lo stato attuale degli studi qumranici: cambiamenti e prospettive», forthcoming.

Qumran. Now that the totality of the manuscripts is available to us, however, both these assumptions have been proven wrong. Only a small fraction of the texts can be considered sectarian or pre-sectarian, and only a fraction can be considered to have been penned at Qumran.⁸ The majority of the texts representing prayers, hymns, wisdom texts, para-biblical compositions, pseudepigraphic writings, etc., do not present any sectarian characteristic at all.⁹ They amount to a total that is roughly equal to or even bigger than all the biblical and sectarian compositions taken together. Of course, this does not make the collection a random sample of texts of Second Temple literature as Norman Golb would have us believe,¹⁰ but its diversity affords us a unique glimpse of the developments that have taken place in Palestinian Judaism before the first century of the common era in many different strands of thought, and not only within the narrow marginal group represented by the community of Qumran.¹¹ Many of the theological developments (such as messianic expectations, belief in bodily resurrection, divine sonship, replacement of the sacrificial cult, eschatological scenarios, etc.), a large number of the halachic disputes (on the

8. See the preliminary classification of the texts by Devorah DIMANT, «The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance», in D. DIMANT and L.H. SCHIFFMAN (eds.), *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness. Papers on the Qumran Scrolls* (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Juda 16; Leiden: Brill 1995), pp. 23-58, and by Armin LANGE, «Annotated List of the Texts from the Judaean Desert Classified by Content and Genre», in E. Tov et al., *The Texts from the Judaean Desert. Indices and An Introduction to the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Series* (DJD 39; Oxford: Clarendon 2002), pp. 115-164.

9. The criteria for defining the «sectarian» or not «sectarian» character of a certain text are still discussed, see C.A. NEWSOM, «“Sectually Explicit” Literature from Qumran», in W.H. PROPP, B. HALPERN and D.N. FREEDMAN (eds.), *The Hebrew Bible and its Interpreters* (Biblical and Judaic Studies 1; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns 1990), pp. 167-187; D. DIMANT, «The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance», in: DIMANT and SCHIFFMAN (eds.), *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness*, 23-58; A. LANGE, *Weisheit und Prädestination: Weisheitliche Urordnung und Prädestination in den Textfunden von Qumran* (STDJ 18; Leiden: Brill 1995), pp. 6-20; J.M. JOKIRANTA, «“Sectarianism” of the Qumran “Sect”: Sociological Notes», *Revue de Qumran* 78/20 (2001) 223-239; Ch. HEMPEL, «Kriterien zur Bestimmung “essenischer Verfasserschaft” von Qumrantexten», in J. FREY and H. STEGEMANN (eds.), *Qumran Kontrovers: Beiträge zu den Textfunden vom Toten Meer* (Einblicke 6; Paderborn: Bonifatius 2003), pp. 71-85.

10. See N. GOLB, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?* (New York: Scribner 1995).

11. At least according to the «Groningen Hypothesis», the paradigm I use to contextualize the Dead Sea Scrolls. See F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, «Orígenes del movimiento esenio y orígenes qumránicos: pistas para una solución», in V. COLLADO BARTOMEU – V. VILAR HUESO (eds.), *II Simposio Bíblico Español* (Valencia-Córdoba: Fundación Bíblica Española 1987), pp. 527-556. «Qumran Origins and Early History», *Folia Orientalia* 25 (1988) 113-136. ID. and A.S. VAN DER WOUDE, «A “Groningen” Hypothesis of Qumran Origins and Early History», *Revue de Qumran* 14/56 (1990) 521-541; ID., «The Origins of the Essene Movement and of the Qumran Sect», in F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – J. TREBOLLE BARRERA, *The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Their Writings, Beliefs and Practices* (Leiden: Brill 1995), pp. 77-96.

sabbath, purity, etc.), or several different structures of community organization, previously attested in Judaism for the first time only within Christian writings, are now documented in these non-sectarian writings. These manuscripts do not only alleviate part of our ignorance of what was going on in Judaism during the Roman period, they also show us the intersection and interrelation, the appropriation and transformation of non-sectarian forms of discourse by the sectarian communities. Besides, the different redactions of several sectarian compositions now available reveal to us some of the developments within the group itself, and may also help us to grasp better the different developments within early Christianity shown in the different writings of the New Testament.

With this in mind, we can now look at the self-understanding of the communities reflected in some of the Qumran texts where the own identity is explicitly stated.

1. *Self-understanding of the community of the Damascus Document*

We may start by looking at the *Damascus Document* (CD). In the first column of this composition (CD 1:13-11), known to us from the two Geniza exemplars¹² and the many copies found at Qumran,¹³ the origins of the group are explicitly set within the context of the history of Israel.¹⁴ Israel as a whole is in state of apostasy, particularly following the exile, but God has preserved a

12. See S. SCHECHTER, *Documents of Jewish Sectaries. 1. Fragments of a Zadokite Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1910). The standard transcription, with excellent photographic reproductions of the two Geniza copies, is by E. Qimron in M. BROSHI (ed.), *The Damascus Document Reconsidered* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society-The Shrine of the Book 1992), pp. 9-49. More recent is the edition by J.M. BAUMGARTEN – D.R. SCHWARTZ, «The Damascus Document (CD)», in J.H. CHARLESWORTH (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*. Vol. 2 (PTSDSSP 2; Tübingen-Louisville: Mohr-Westminster John Knox 1995), pp. 4-57.

13. The copies found on the different caves of Qumran have been published by Milik (Caves 5 and 6) and Baumgarten (Cave 4) respectively in M. BAILLET, J.T. MILIK, R. DE VAUX, *Les "Petites grottes" de Qumrân* (DJD 3; Oxford: Clarendon 1962) and J.M. BAUMGARTEN, *Qumran Cave 4. XIII: The Damascus Document (4Q266-273)* (DJD 18; Oxford: Clarendon 1996) respectively. I use here my own edition (both for the Geniza and for the 4Q copies), published in F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – E.J.C. TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. Vol. 1 (1Q1-4Q273) (Leiden-Grand Rapids: Brill-Eerdmans 2000), pp. 550- 627. The English translations of the texts are taken from this edition.

14. For a sober presentation of the texts related to the origins of the community behind the *Damascus Document* see Ch. HEMPEL, «Community Origins in the Damascus Document in the Light of Recent Scholarship», in D.W. PARRY – E. ULRICH (eds.), *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts and Reformulated Issues* (STDJ 30; Leiden: Brill 1999), pp. 316-329, and the sensible analysis of M.L. GROSSMAN, *Reading for History in the Damascus Document* (STDJ 45; Leiden: Brill 2002).

small group (a remnant) of people among whom he «has caused to sprout a root of the planting», who recognised their sins and sought God «with undivided heart». God raised up for them a Teacher of Righteousness who directed them in the ways of God.¹⁵ The origin of this small covenant community is set in an eschatological perspective: it happens at the «last period»,¹⁶ at the time of «God's visit».¹⁷ This group appropriates for itself the name of Israel and uses it to identify itself in many places in the document, particularly in *CD* 3:12-16.¹⁸ The mechanisms of appropriation are clearly reflected in the names used as self-designations of the members («the converts of Israel»;¹⁹ «the elected of Israel»;²⁰ even «seed of Israel»²¹) and in the rhetoric used to demonise all other «sons of Israel» who are outside the group, the «sons of the pit»,²² describing them as «they are all igniters of fire, kindlers of blazes, webs of a spider and their webs, and their eggs are viper's egg».²³

It is with this Israel, which expresses the group's self-identity and which is designated as a «remnant»,²⁴ with whom God has established his covenant, a

15. For a more detailed analysis of this text, see P.R. DAVIES, *The Damascus Covenant. An Interpretation of the "Damascus Document"* (JSOTSup 25; Sheffield: JSOT Press 1983), pp. 56-104; M. KNIBB, *The Qumran Community* (Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987), pp. 23-25; J.M. BOYCE, «The Poetry of the Damascus Document and its Bearing on the Origin of the Qumran Sect», *Revue de Qumrân* 56/14 (1990) 615-628, and Ch. HEMPEL, *The Damascus Texts* (Companion to the Qumran Scrolls 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 2000), pp. 27-28.

16. The text designates this period as «the period of wrath» (בְּקֶץ חָרוֹן), which refers to «the last period» (קֶץ אַחֲרֹן), a period of undefined length which marks both the emergence of the group and the end of time. See A. STEUDEL, «אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים in the Texts from Qumran», *RevQ* 62/16 (1993) 225-246; J.J. COLLINS, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge 1997); F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, «Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls», in J.J. COLLINS (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism. Vol. 1: The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Continuum 1998), pp. 162-192.

17. «He visited them» (פָּקַדָם), using the same root which at Qumran designated the divine judgement at the end of history.

18. On this appropriation of the name «Israel» by the members of the group see P.R. DAVIES, «Who Can Join the "Damascus Covenant"», *JJS* 46 (1995) 134-142, and J.J. COLLINS, «The Construction of Israel in Sectarian Rule Books», in A.J. AVERY-PECK, J. NEUSNER, B. CHILTON (eds.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity. Part 5 Vol. 1: The Judaism of Qumran: A Systemic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Theory of Israel* (HdO Section One 56; Leiden: Brill 2001), pp. 25-42. On the use of the name Israel in the literature of the period, see G. HARVEY, *The True Israel. Uses of the Names Jew, Hebrew and Israel in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature* (AGAJUC 35; Leiden: Brill 1996).

19. *CD* 4:2; 6:4; 8:16.

20. *CD* 4:2-4.

21. *CD* 12:22.

22. *CD* 6:15.

23. *CD* 5:13-14.

24. *CD* 1:4-5.

covenant that is called in the *CD* most appropriately «new covenant».²⁵ This means that the concept of covenant of the Hebrew Bible, with its ethnic dimension («the people of the covenant») has been deeply transformed.²⁶ If the «covenant» in the Hebrew Bible was one of the most distinctive marks to differentiate Israel from other peoples, this «new covenant» is now also used to differentiate the members of the group («those who have entered the covenant»²⁷) from all the other «sons of Israel» who are not members of the group.

Being born to Israel and belonging to the seed of Abraham, is no longer sufficient for entry into this «new covenant». A personal decision is now required, and this involves at least two basic elements: conversion and acceptance of a revealed Torah:

«But with those who remained steadfast in God's precepts, with those who were left from them, God established his covenant with Israel for ever, revealing to them hidden matters in which all Israel had gone stray.»²⁸

Conversion implies turning one's back to the ways of the people who «had strayed from the path» following «the hidden things on which all Israel has gone astray». These hidden things have been revealed only to the members of the group.²⁹ According to the summary of *CD* 3:14-16, these revealed things are «his holy sabbaths and his glorious feasts, his just stipulations and his truthful paths, and the wishes of his will which man must do in order to live by them. He disclosed to them and they dug a well of plentiful waters and whoever spurns them shall not live». In the more detailed section of *CD* 6:13-7:5, this well is identified with the Torah and the resulting «revealed things» (which imply a long list of cultic, ritual and ethic matters of the Torah) are presented as «the correct interpretation of the Torah for the age of wickedness»³⁰. The

25. ברית חדשה (*CD* 6:9; 8:21; 19:34). See E.J. CHRISTIANSEN, «The Consciousness of Belonging to God's Covenant and What it Entails According to the Damascus Document and the Community Rule», in F.H. CRYER – T.L. THOMPSON (eds.), *Qumran Between the Old and New Testaments* (JSOTSup 290-Copenhagen International Seminar 6; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1998), pp. 69-97.

26. The same conclusion is reached on the three detailed analysis of the concept of covenant at Qumran, included on the book edited by S.E. PORTER and J.C.R. DE ROO, *The Concept of Covenant in the second Temple Period* (JSJSup 71; Leiden: Brill 2003); C.A. EVANS, «Covenant in the Qumran Literature», pp. 55-80; M.G. ABEGG, «The Covenant of the Qumran Sectarrians», pp. 81-97, and M.O. WISE, «The Concept of a New Covenant in the Teacher Hymns from Qumran (1QH^a X-XVII)», pp. 99-128.

27. *CD* 2:2; 6:11; 8:1; 9:3; 16:12; 19:14; 20:25.

28. *CD* 3:12-13.

29. On the opposed pair of «hidden matters» (נסתרות) and «revealed matters» (נגלות), see H.L. SCHIFFMAN, *The Halakhah at Qumran* (SJLA 16; Leiden: Brill 1975) 22-32.

30. *CD* 6:14.

same text specifies the agent who has mediated this revelation, the staff used to dig the well, who is called «Interpreter of the Law» and who is the same charismatic figure who has directed the group «in the path of God's heart».

In the group of the *Damascus Document*, for so far I can ascertain, the «other» against whom the identity of the «we» is defined, is always the fellow Jew, and the ethnic boundary is never crossed. The *Damascus Document* refers in several places to non-Jews, to pagans (גוים) and to strangers (בן הנכר), but always as a matter of fact.³¹ The position vis-à-vis the «alien resident», (גר) is more complicated.³² גר is a word that refers in the Hebrew Bible to an ambiguous category of persons; in the Priestly legislation the גר, as opposed to the «the native» (אזרח), is submitted to the obligations of the Law and forms part of «Israel» but not of the «sons of Israel».³³ In Ezekiel's vision, the situation of the גר will be different since the גרים «will be to you like the native (כאזרח) among the sons of Israel» (Ez 47:21-23). Later on, and under the influence of Hellenistic ideas, where it is possible to be Greek without belonging to the Greek γένος,³⁴ the word will attain the meaning it has in rabbinic literature: the «convert» to Judaism as religion.³⁵

In CD 14:3-6, in a section that lists the different categories of members of the group and of their respective ranking in the meetings («priest», «levite», «sons of Israel» and «proselyte» [גר]), the גרים form the lowest category, but nonetheless they are one of the categories of members of the group. This position is directly opposed to the one reflected in other texts, such as 4Q174 1:2-6,

31. See L.H. SCHIFFMAN, «Non-Jews in the Dead Sea Scrolls», in C.A. EVANS – Sh. TALMON (eds.), *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honour of James A. Sanders* (Biblical Interpretation Series 28; Leiden: Brill 1997), pp. 153-171, and specifically for the uses of *goyim* and *ben nekar* in CD, L.H. SCHIFFMAN, «Legislation Concerning Relations with Non-Jews in the Zadokite Fragments and in Tannaitic Literature», *Revue de Qumrân* 43/11 (1983) 379-389.

32. See K. BERTHELOT, «La notion de גר dans les textes de Qumrân», *Revue de Qumrân* 74/19 (1999) 171-216.

33. See Ch. van HOUTEN, *The Alien in Israelite Law* (JSOTSup 107; Sheffield: JSOT Press 1991).

34. See D.R. SCHWARTZ, «The other in 1 and 2 Maccabees», in G.N. STANTON – G.G. STROUMSA, *Tolerance and Intolerance in early Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998), pp. 30-37, and S.J.D. COHEN, «Ioudaios: «Judaean» and «Jew» in Susanna, First Maccabees, and Second Maccabees», in H. CANKI, H. LICHTENBERGER, P. SCHÄFER (eds.), *Geschichte-Tradition-Reflexion. Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*. Vol. 1: *Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr 1996), pp. 211-220.

35. For the meaning of גר in rabbinic literature, see G.G. PORTON, *The Stranger within Your Gates: Converts and Conversion in Rabbinic Literature* (Chicago 1994). On the change of meaning of the word in general, see D. WIEWEGER, «Vom «Fremling» zum «Proselyt». Zur sakralrechtlichen Definition des גר im späten 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.», in D. WIEWEGER – E.J. WASCHKE (eds.), *Von Gott reden. Beiträge zur Theologie und Exegese des Alten Testament. Festschrift für S. Wagner zum 65. Geburtstag* (Neuchirchen-Vluyn: Neuchirchene Verlag 1995), pp. 271-284.

for example, where the גֵרִים are totally excluded forever. I have dealt elsewhere with this problem in detail³⁶ and concluded that *CD* adheres to the model of the Hebrew Bible represented by Ezekiel,³⁷ and that the גֵרִים can cross the border that divides the community from the others. They also may chose to convert and become members of the «New Covenant».

In summary we can state that the members of the group behind the *Damascus Document* consider themselves as forming a «New Covenant» from which all other Israelites who are not faithful to the Torah as revealed to them through the agency of the founder/leader are excluded. In spite of this polarity between «we» and the «others», the frontier of this group to which the Covenant between God and Israel has been transferred remains temporarily open to others, namely to all those (including the גֵרִים) who are willing to convert, to follow all the details of the revealed Torah as interpreted within the group, and to become members of the group that is «the remnant of Israel».

2. Self-understanding of the community of the Serek ha-Yahad

The community to which the *Serek ha-Yahad* (1QS, or *Rule of the Community*)³⁸ is addressed is closely related, but clearly different from the community to which the *Damascus Document* is addressed.³⁹ It is little wonder, there-

36. See F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, «La memoria inventada: el «otro» en los manuscritos de Qumrán», in J. CAMPOS SANTIAGO – V. PASTOR JULIÁN (eds.), *Congreso Internacional «Biblia, memoria histórica y encrucijada de culturas»*. Actas (Zamora: Asociación Bíblica Española 2004), pp. 49-71.

37. They are not «proselytes» to the sect, or in the process of initiation into it, as Davis would like. See P.R. DAVIES, «The «Damascus» Sect and Judaism», in J.C. REEVES – J. KAMPEN (eds.), *Pursuing the Text: Studies in Honor of B.Z. Wacholder* (SDOTSup 184; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1994), pp. 70-84.

38. The copy from Cave 1 was published by M. BURROWS, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark Monastery*. Vol. II, fasc. 2: *Plates and Transcription of the The Manual of Discipline* (New Haven: The American Schools of Oriental Research 1951). More recent are the editions by E. QIMRON – J.H. CHARLESWORTH, «Rule of the Community», in J.H. CHARLESWORTH (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*. Vol. 1 (PTSDSSP 1; Tübingen-Louisville: Mohr-Westminster/John Knox 1994), pp. 1-54, and by C. MARTONE, *La «Regola della Comunità» Edizione critica* (Quaderni di Henoch 8; Torino: Silvio Zamorani 1995). The best photographs of this manuscript are found in the multilingual edition by J.H. CHARLESWORTH, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Rule of the Community. Photographic Multi-Lingual Edition* (Philadelphia: The American Interfaith Institute/World Alliance 1996). The copies from Cave 4 have been published by P.S. ALEXANDER – G. VERMES, *Qumran Cave 4: XIX. Serek ha-Yahad and Two Related Texts* (DJD 26; Oxford: Clarendon 1998). I use here my own edition, published in F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ – E.J.C. TIGCHELAAR, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. Vol. 1 (1Q1-4Q273) (Leiden-Grand Rapids: Brill-Eerdmans 2000). pp. 68-99 (1QS) and 510-545 (4QS).

39. The relationship among the two communities is still very much disputed, and the bibliography on the topic is very abundant. For a summary of the different positions, see S. METZO,

fore, that the language it uses to speak of itself is different,⁴⁰ and that the ways it expresses its self-identity and fixes boundaries with respect «the others» are also different and are presented as polar opposites.

In the *Rule*, we do not find the concept of «New Covenant». As against the *Damascus Document*, the *Rule* does not insert its own history within the history of Israel, but formulates a covenantal theology with other parameters and with a more radical polarity.⁴¹ The term ברית, «covenant», is very much present in the *Rule* (the word is used 32 times) but it no longer refers to the covenant of God with Israel, but rather to the specific covenant with the members of the group.⁴² As a matter of fact, it becomes one of terms of self-designation employed by the group together with יחד.⁴³ God has established a covenant with the members («the choosen» בחרים), a covenant into which they enter in the ceremony of entrance described in the first columns of the *Rule* where it is simply called ברית הוזה, «this covenant».⁴⁴ The finality of this covenant is the perfect observance of God's will:

«And all those who enter in the rule of the Community shall establish a covenant before God in order to carry out all that He commanded and in order not to stray from following Him out of any fear, dread, or testing (that might occur) during the dominion of Belial.»⁴⁵

«Constitutional Rules at Qumran», and Ch. HEMPEL, «Community Structures in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Admission, Organization, Disciplinary Procedures», in P.W. FLINT – J.C. VANDERKAM (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years. A Comprehensive Assessment* (Leiden: Brill 1998-1999), respectively on Vol. I, pp. 186-210 and on Vol. II, pp. 67-92. The most recent study of which I am aware is E. REGEV «The *Yahad* and the *Damascus Covenant*: Structure, Organization and Relationship», *Revue de Qumrân* 82/21 (2003) 233-262.

40. See, for example, P.R. DAVIES, «The Torah at Qumran», in A.J. AVERY-PECK, J. NEUSNER, B. CHILTON (eds.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity*. Part 5, Vol. 2: *The Judaism of Qumran: A Systemic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls. World View, Comparing Judaism* (HdO Section One 57; Leiden: Brill 2001), pp. 23-44: «The scriptural distinction between “Israel” and “gentiles” is, from the perspective of the *yahad*, theologically almost irrelevant compared to that between those inside and those outside the realm of God's saving “mystery”» (p. 36).

41. See the references given on n. 20.

42. See the article by Christiansen, quoted on n. 19.

43. This conclusion was already reached by A.S. KAPELRUD, «Der Bund in den Qumran-Schriften», in *Bibel und Qumran: Beiträge zur Erforschung der Beziehungen zwischen Bibel- und Qumranwissenschaft. Hans Bardtke zum 22.9.1966* (Berlin: Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft 1968), pp. 137-149. See also N. ILG, «Überlegungen zum Verständnis von ברית in den Qumrântexten», in M. DELCOR (ed.), *Qumrân. Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (BETL 46; Paris-Leuven: Duculot-Leuven University Press 1978), pp. 257-264.

44. P.R. DAVIES, «The Torah at Qumran», 35 notes: «It is a covenant with a group, and every new adherent of the group must individually “enter the covenant”. It is an elective covenant, entered after conversion (hence the use of the verb *shub*, which connotes repentance as well as return); and it is a sectarian covenant, since it excludes those outside the group who do not “return” or “repent” and yet would also call themselves “Israel” and claim allegiance to the covenant.»

45. 1QS 1:16-18.

God's will is expressed in the Mosaic Law, of course, but only as it is interpreted within the group: «in compliance with all that has been revealed of it (the Torah) to the sons of Zadok, the priests who keep the covenant and interpret his will and to the multitude of the men of their covenant who freely volunteer for this truth and to walk according to his will» as is specified in IQS 5:8-9.⁴⁶

Neither lineage, nor being sons of Abraham, are considered necessary referents in order to enter into this covenant. The essential elements are to belong by lot to the «sons of light», the personal decision of conversion, the joining of the Yahad-group and the separation from all others who are «sons of darkness». This view is stipulated clearly at the beginning of the *Rule*, before the ceremony of entrance into the covenant, and before the basic polarity is spelled out in the tractate of the Two Spirits of columns 3-4:

«In order to welcome all those who freely volunteer to carry out God's decrees into the covenant of fidelity; in order to be united in the counsel of God and walk in perfection in his sight, complying with all revealed things concerning the regulated times of their stipulations; in order to love all the sons of light, each one according to his lot in God's plan, and to detest all the sons of darkness, each one in accordance with his guilt in God's vindication.»⁴⁷

The opposition between the «we» (the sons of light) and the «others» (the sons of darkness) at this juncture is ontological, total. The polarity is not established between Israel and the other peoples, but it is an almost metaphysical opposition, the opposition between the forces of good and evil.⁴⁸ The logical consequence should be that the «others» to which the «we» are opposed are the rest of humanity: the «sons of Israel» who are not members of the group and all other human beings as well. But the *Rule* does not extract this logical consequence which would have made the ethnic division among Israel and the nations void. Strangely enough, the horizon of the *Rule* remains completely within the ethnic boundaries Israel, its perspective is «inner-Jewish,» and the

46. In the more «democratic» version of this passage found in 4Q258 1:5-7 the receptors of this revelation are not the priests but all the members: «And whoever enters the council of the Community shall make a binding promise to revert to the Law of Moses with whole heart and whole soul, all that has been revealed from the Law in accordance with the opinion of the council of the men of the Community.» But in both systems what really count is the fidelity to revealed form of the Law. On the differences among the two versions of the *Rule*, see G. VERMES, «The Leadership of the Qumran Community: Sons of Zadok – Priests – Congregation», in H. CANKI, H. LICHTENBERGER, P. SCHÄFER (eds.), *Geschichte-Tradition-Reflexion. Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*. Vol. 1: *Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr 1996), pp. 375-384.

47. IQS 1:7-10.

48. See F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ, «Dualismo qumránico y el origen del mal», in J. VÁZQUEZ ALLEGUE (ed.), *Para comprender los Manuscritos del Mar Muerto* (Estella: Verbo Divino 2004), pp. 103-118.

«sons of darkness» are the Jews who are not members of the group.⁴⁹ Although the curses are directed to «all the men of the lot of Belial» they are in fact addressed only to the other Jews, only the «sons of Israel» are specifically named.⁵⁰ Non-Jews are (so to speak) non-existent for the *yahad*.

This element appears clearly in the functions attributed to the group, which replace the functions of Israel's cultic system: «to atone for sin by doing justice», and to «atone for the land (which obviously is the land of Israel), and to decide the judgement of wickedness»,⁵¹ that is «to render the wicked their retribution».⁵² The Community is the spiritual temple, «the holy house for Israel and the foundation of the holy of holiest for Aaron»,⁵³ where no sacrifices are needed «without the flesh of burn offerings and without the fats of sacrifice» since «the offering of the lips and the perfectness of behaviour will be acceptable like a freewill offering».⁵⁴

This is equally clear in the way the logical conclusion, physical separation from all others, is formulated: «they will be separated from the congregation of the men of injustice»,⁵⁵ «they are to be segregated from within the dwelling of the men of sin to walk to the desert to open there His path, as it is written "In the desert, etc."»,⁵⁶ or in the words of 1QS 5:

«He should swear by the covenant to be segregated from all the men of injustice who walk along the path of wickedness. For they are not included in his covenant since they have neither sought nor examined his decrees in order to know the hidden matters in which they err by their own fault and because they treated revealed matters with disrespect; this is why wrath will rise up for judgement in order to inflict revenge by the curses of the covenant, in order to administer fierce punishments for everlasting annihilation without there being any remnant.»⁵⁷

49. J.J. COLLINS, «The Construction of Israel in Sectarian Rule Books», in A.J. AVERY-PECK, J. NEUSNER, B. CHILTON (eds.), *Judaism in Late Antiquity*. Part 5 Vol. 1: *The Judaism of Qumran: A Systemic Reading of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Theory of Israel* (HdO Section One 56; Leiden: Brill 2001), pp. 25-42 reaches the same conclusion: «The Sons of Light never encompass all the Israelites, but there is no suggestion that they include any gentiles. The dualism of light and darkness is fundamentally different from the opposition of Israel and the nations, but the difference is not explored or developed in a consistent way. It was attractive to the sectarians as a way of explaining why much of Israel deviated from the way of truth, as they saw it. In the end, however, the identity of the sectarians was deeply rooted in the traditions of Israel, and consequently the dualism of light and darkness has only an occasional and subordinate role in the scrolls» (p. 37)

50. 1QS 2:4-9.

51. 1QS 8:10

52. 1QS 8:7.

53. 1QS 8:5.

54. 1QS 9:4-5.

55. 1QS 5:1-2.

56. 1QS 8:13-14.

57. 1QS 5:10-13.

The use of the term «congregation», the reference to Isaiah with the implied supposition of an Israel still in «exile» for which the community opens the path of return, and the «men of injustice» from which the group should separate, leaves no doubt, in my opinion, on the exclusively «inner-Jewish» perspective of the group.⁵⁸

In summary we can say that for the members of the *yahad* group the «other» is completely excluded and no relationship with him is allowed. Physical separation is the ultimate result of this radicalization of the self-identity of the Community of the «sons of light» to which all others Jewish are «sons of darkness». Although the dualism that constitutes the self-expression of their identity would have required the suppression of the concept of ethnicity, the horizon of the group is purely inner-Jewish.

* * *

The identity of this mechanisms with the mechanisms of formulating the self-identity of emerging Christianity known from the New Testament are so obvious that they hardly need any comment: in both corpora we find the polarized setting, the concept of «New Covenant», the eschatological context, the function of the charismatic leader that gives the right interpretation of God's will contained in the Torah, the appropriation of Israel's cultic system and its transfer to the Community. Our study of the two related communities of the *Damascus Document* and of the *Rule of the Community* facilitates, in my opinion, our understanding of the development of the self-understanding of early Christianity and the way it is expressed in the New Testament.

In the last analysis, of course, Christianity was to abandon the concept of ethnicity and the concept of fidelity to the Law of Moses. But the two entities we have been examining —the Jewish groups behind the Qumran texts, and the Jewish groups behind emerging Christianity— were shaped by the same heritage (the Hebrew Bible), developed similar strategies and used similar vocabulary in order to transform this common heritage to express their respective identities. Therefore, and by way of conclusion, I can endorse without hesitation the words that Georges Nickelsburg spoke at the round table in the IOQS

58. In the words of J.J. Collins («The Construction of Israel», 42): «Followed to its logical conclusion, this dualistic theology might have yielded a definition of Israel as a purely ethical, voluntary community, where ethnicity, and even particularistic revelation of the Torah, was of no account. Hellenistic Jewish writers such as Philo often speak as if Israel should be understood in this way but nonetheless retain both ethnicity and the literal Torah as a data of Israel's identity. Early Christianity would go further in redefining "the Israel of God" as independent of considerations of ethnicity and the Torah. The scrolls, ultimately, are not so radical. Their definition of Israel remains rooted firmly in the Torah, however sharply they might disagree with their contemporaries over its interpretation.»

meeting at Groningen, dedicated to the problem of «Defining identities: We, you and the others in the Dead Sea Scrolls» last July:

«A similar form of polarizing tradition is found at many points in the New Testament, which claim that the emerging Christianity is the sole arena of salvation, constituted by eschatological revelation not about right Torah, but about Jesus, the final and unique agent of God's activity in the world. Its openness to gentiles notwithstanding, the *ekklesia* is an exclusivist Jewish sect with a construction of reality that has much in common with the *yahad*.»⁵⁹

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Resum

La present contribució reflexiona sobre l'autocomprensió i la definició de la pròpia identitat reflectida en dos textos fonamentals de la biblioteca de Qumran: el *Document de Damasc* (CD) (els membres d'aquest grup pertanyen a una «aliança nova» que és la «resta d'Israel») i la *Regla de la Comunitat* (1QS) (els seus membres són els únics «fills de la llum» que s'oposen a tots els «fills de les tenebres») i suggereix que les estratègies seguides i el vocabulari emprat per aquests grups no difereixen substancialment de les estratègies i del vocabulari emprat per les primeres comunitats cristianes per a definir la seva pròpia identitat.

59. To be published in F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ (ed.), *Defining Identities: We, you and the others in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ; Leiden: Brill 2005).